

IB Theory of Knowledge

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“All men have opinions, but few think.” – George Berkeley

Theory of Knowledge is the capstone course in the International Baccalaureate program of study. The major themes in our TOK course of study are:

- *How do you know?*
- *How do you know that what you think you know is true?*
- *What is knowledge?*

There are many different ***ways of knowing*** something. Language, Reason, Emotion, and Perception are the major ways we observe, research, and learn in our everyday world. In the course of the school day, our ways of knowing are broken down into more curricular driven areas of knowledge. These ***areas of knowledge*** are the Natural Sciences, Ethics, Mathematics, Human Sciences, History, and the Arts.

TOK is designed to challenge us to reflect critically on diverse ways of knowing and to consider the role which knowledge plays in a global society and our assumptions in everyday life. Essentially, the purpose of both TOK and the entire IB program is to better enable you to become a well-rounded individual and a life-long learner. You should come out of TOK with a better understanding of both who you are and how you think about real life situations, your everyday life, and the world around you.

“To know one’s ignorance is the best part of knowledge” – Lao Tse

TOK Course Aims

The overall aim of TOK is to encourage students to formulate answers to the question “how do you know?” in a variety of contexts, and to see the value of that question. This allows students to develop an enduring fascination with the richness of knowledge.

Specifically, the aims of the TOK course are for students to:

1. make connections between a critical approach to the construction of knowledge, the academic disciplines and the wider world
2. develop an awareness of how individuals and communities construct knowledge and how this is critically examined
3. develop an interest in the diversity and richness of cultural perspectives and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions
4. critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, leading to more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives
5. understand that knowledge brings responsibility which leads to commitment and action.

TOK Course Assessment Objectives

It is expected that by the end of the TOK course, students will be able to:

1. identify and analyse the various kinds of justifications used to support knowledge claims
2. formulate, evaluate and attempt to answer knowledge questions
3. examine how academic disciplines/areas of knowledge generate and shape knowledge
4. understand the roles played by ways of knowing in the construction of shared and personal knowledge
5. explore links between knowledge claims, knowledge questions, ways of knowing and areas of knowledge
6. demonstrate an awareness and understanding of different perspectives and be able to relate these to one’s own perspective
7. explore a real-life/contemporary situation from a TOK perspective in the presentation.

Grading Procedures:

Students will be assessed in a variety of ways. In addition to class participation, students can expect to write a number of critical essays and prepare oral presentations. Of main importance are the IBO prescribed External Assessment Essay and the Internal Assessment Presentation.

Three Components of the Semester Grade:

- Class participation (20%)
 - Discussion is mandatory and essential in this class. THINK, LISTEN and SHARE! Always show respect for the person speaking. If someone is speaking, you should be listening and thinking about what they are saying. Asking good questions and facilitating good conversation around a topic will guarantee maximum points in this category.
 - ***Common Agreements for Class Discussions:***
 - MUCH OF TOK CONSISTS OF QUESTIONS
 - WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT
 - DISAGREEMENT IS LIKELY
 - Face each other to ensure eye contact.
 - Be a good listener. Be open to, and respond to, what has been said. Do not just wait to state your own preconceived idea.
 - Respect all: No gloating, taunting or sarcasm.
 - If you have something to contribute there is a moral imperative to do so.
 - Do not pretend to understand if you don't. Ask for clarification.
 - One voice at a time. No ongoing battles between domineering individuals.
 - Be rigorous and have fun!
- Journal (20%)
 - Journals are intended to give students an opportunity to reflect on the readings and discussions each day in class and to develop their analysis of the "problems of knowledge" in new and thought-provoking ways. Some journals will be based on a specific assignment, while others will allow more freedom. Entries may include poetry, music, artwork, etc. You must have this journal with you every day in class. Journals will be checked often and students should be writing in them every day we are in class.
- Projects and Quizzes (60%)

Grade Related Class Policies:

- **Missing Work:** The opportunity to use the Second Chance Room will be given to students who will benefit from additional study time.
- **Absences:** If absent, it is the student's responsibility to check with the teacher for missing formative and summative assessment assignments.
- **Learner Profile:**
 - **Active Learning:** Active learning is contributing to class discussions on a daily basis through the asking of questions, commenting on others comments, furthering ideas, and speaking respectfully and often. It also includes doing all your daily work with full effort.
 - **Integrity:** Academic honesty is of the utmost importance to the instructors of this course and is a vital part of maintaining a credible institution of learning. Academic dishonesty tarnishes the integrity of everyone involved and ruins careers and reputations. There is absolutely no excuse for academic dishonesty. If you are caught participating in any behavior that is academically dishonest as defined by the SAS Student Handbook, the instructor will follow school guidelines in reporting your offense. This may result in a failing grade for the assessment or course. If you are having difficulty keeping up with the workload for this course, please see your instructor. In addition to abiding by all Academic Honesty guidelines in the Student Handbook, a student demonstrating Integrity is focused and on task at all times – no Skype, no dashboard games, no fantasy sports, etc.
 - **Responsibility:** Student completes assignments on time and with full effort.

SIGNATURES

“I have read and understood the course rules and regulations for TOK.”

Student Name (please print):

Student Signature:

Student Email:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Parent/Guardian Email: